

00:00:01 Artem

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening and welcome to EDI Dialogues at UCL.

Our topic of the day is affirmative action, and I would like to welcome Amin Afrouzi, who is a research fellow at Yale.

00:00:14 Amin

Thank you. Thanks for having me. It's a delight to be here at UCL.

00:00:19 Artem

I'm also here with two more of my colleagues. My name is Artem Massey and I'm a first-year philosophy student.

00:00:24 Simona

My name is Simona Aimar and I am the vice Dean of EDI for Arts and Humanities here at UCL.

00:00:32 Kirstine

And my name is Kirstine La Cour, I'm a PhD student in philosophy also here at UCL.

Now, a typical u5e4efa1 0 0 1.00000912 0 612 792 reW\*hBT/F2 11 Tf1 0 0 1 147.8 22.38m612 79nD

Suppose out of the 20 candidates that you have, if you constantly get 12 non-minority students and eight minority students, what I'm trying to propose is that instead of changing the criteria, you still admit on the same criteria that's race or gender neutral, for example, but that you don't admit two of the candidates from the non-minority students who would have otherwise gotten admitted and instead of them, you admit two minority students who would have not otherwise gotten admitted. And so you will end up with 10 minority students and 10 non-minority students.

00:03:29 Kirstine

And could tell us a little bit about what led you to argue for this

That's a good question. And I think many people share that anxiety.

First to the idea that the society has to bear the costs of this sort of intervention. So as you said, people may be worried that we don't have the best doctors then as a result in the society if we're not admitting the top candidates for medical school. There the problem is that we think that the people that we are admitting by error are going to be not necessarily qualified, but I think that's a mistake because first of all the margin of difference between these candidates are very low. Again go back to the example of 20 people that you are trying to admit. It is not the case that the person who ends up on this list at the place of 21 or 22 won't make a good doctor. They are probably as qualified or as capable to make good doctors if they were given the chance, and sometimes even it turns out that they are not just equally qualified, that they may be better qualified because when we try to select candidates, we are guessing a lot of times. And it may turn out that a candidate that doesn't look so good on the paper might actually outperform other of their peers, and vice versa. A candidate that looks really good on paper might not perform as well.

But even if, you know, we're selecting really based on capability and skill, the difference between the person who ranks 20 and 21 is so small that the output of this sort of intervention won't be actually in any sort of real difference in what quality doctors we'll get.

And to the point that it's unfair to the best performing candidates, similar sort of analysis applies because given that the criteria on the paper that we select based on don't necessarily always matches up to their actual performance in the real world as doctors means that it's not necessarily the case that they, the person who ends up 20 / 21 has the sort of right to be selected.

But beyond that, the population who disproportionately benefits from the errors in the system, can be held subject to evening that benefit out.

00:10:13 Simona

Thank you Amin, I find this embracing error approach really interesting, but I have a broad picture type of question. While doing EDI ca0 G0TET612 792 (ut)36u5(t)5(o)0912 0 6UW\*ñBT/F2 11 Tf1 0 0 1 122.55 313.6 Tm0 g0 G0TET

And maybe that's one way of bringing it together because affirmative action is not simply a purely legal question. Rather, it is a social question, it's a moral question, and it's a political question, and institutions are playing only one part in this bigger dialogue.

00:12:30 Kirstine

Obviously, there's much more to discuss, and Amin, I'm sure we'll all look forward to following your ongoing work on this topic. Thank you so much for your time here today. I'm Kirstine. I'm here with Artem and Simona, and this has been UCL EDI Dialogues.